The Vedas Say They MUST be Shared With Everyone

By Stephen Knapp

For those of us who have traveled the length and breadth of India, there are many temples that have allowed us in and left indelible and inspiring memories for our spiritual progress. There have also been some temples who have kept us out, or even kicked us out after we have already entered, as if they do not want to share their culture with us, or anyone they feel does not meet their requirements. I can understand that to a degree. But with a little research, I have found that even the *Vedas* say they should be shared with everyone, regardless of race, caste, ethnicity, etc., as long as the people are respectful and sincere. And when I say *Vedas*, I=m talking about those early books such as the *Atharva* and *Yajur Vedas* that many seem to regard as being more authoritative than the more recent texts, like the *Itihasas* or *Puranas*. And here is what they say:

First of all it is explained that the *Vedas* spring from God: AThe verses of the *Rig Veda*, the *Sama Veda*, the *Atharva Veda*, and the *Yajur Veda*, along with the verses pertaining to the creation and dissolution of the universe, all the luminous objects in heaven, and all emancipated souls spring from God.@ (*Atharva Veda*, Book 11, Hymn 7, Verse 24)

Not only does it establishes that the Vedic knowledge originates with God, but: AIn the enjoyable realm of God, full of manifold powers, do the emancipated souls, calm and sedate, sing in a sweet voice the glory of the knowledge of the *Vedas*.@ (*Atharva* 5.6.3)

Therefore, having originated with God, the Vedic knowledge is the greatest fortune that one can acquire, a spiritual vibration that pervades both the spiritual world, as well as the material creation. It is, thus, the rarest good fortune for anyone to come in contact with it, as confirmed, AOf all the beautiful forces, which the investigators after truth have accepted as excellent, elevating themselves through the contemplation of God, comradeship and charity, the sagacious learned person deems the Vedic knowledge to be the most developed and majestic.

AScholars considered in doubt whether Vedic knowledge was a desirable or undesirable object. The wise learned persons declared it as the most desirable of desirable objects.@ (*Atharva* 12.4.41-42)

One of the reasons for this view, as also explained, is that the highest understanding of life, namely God, can be realized through Vedic knowledge. This means that God is not merely a belief, but is the highest truth that can be realized or perceived through such knowledge and practice. AThe Divine God, who is the Lord of the world, should alone be honored and worshiped by the people. I realize Thee, O Divine Lord, through the knowledge of the *Vedas*. May I enjoy Your company in the highest stage of liberation. My obeisances to You.@ (*Atharva* 2.2.1)

As with most Vedic knowledge, what is said in one place is often corroborated in another within the Vedic texts. And here we have the above point also made in the *Yajur Veda* (29.29) but it also says that such God realization removes all miseries: AO men, in this world, the Immortal God, all-pervading space, beyond the light of day, early in the morning before dawn, grants to the learned and immortal soul happiness that removes miseries and is most excellent. Know and realize Him by following the instructions of the *Vedas*.@

This is an important point, that humanity=s search for happiness does not rely on catering to the needs of the body as much as it does on the realization of and attaining unity with God: AO yogis, unite the soul with God and enjoy happiness. Always expand the delight of salvation [spiritual liberation]. Employ your acts of devotion, and arteries full of breath [*prana*], in the worship of God. Having thus purified the mind, sow the seed of knowledge in it through yoga. May we soon acquire the fruit of all yogas. May we, through God=s grace, obtain the mature fruit of pure joy. Yogic functions act like sickles in allaying [cutting down] sufferings. May they be endowed with peace and prosperity. Practice union with God through them.@ (*Atharva* 3.17.2)

However, who can actually attain this knowledge, this happiness and freedom from miseries through unity with God? Only a devotee, obviously, because without a receptive consciousness, a doubter remains cut off from the means of spiritual realization. AA devotee alone beholds that Highest God, who lies hidden in the inmost recesses of the heart, in whom this whole universe remains in one form and fashion. From Him hath matter milked life and brought into existence many objects. The learned who know God, extol Him in a respectable way.@ (*Atharva* 2.1.1)

Yes, only devotees can acquire the means to approach God, but, nonetheless, God is equal to all and gives everyone the opportunity to approach Him. AGod is He who is equally kind to each. God is He, who specially treats each according to his deserts. God is He, who generally pervades each place. God is He who is present in each place, with His special characteristics. God is He who loves the learned as well as the ordinary mortals.@ (*Atharva* 4.16.8)

Therefore, God being equal to everyone allows everyone to be benefitted to the degree to which they use the spiritual knowledge found within the *Vedas*. As it is explained, it is through the *Vedas*, and all supporting Vedic literature, that God preaches to humanity. AGod, who is the controller of the universe, is the Creator and Knower of all objects. He preaches through the *Vedas*, the different modes of creation of all the forces of nature, like the sun, earth, etc. From Him comes the knowledge of the *Vedas*. Hence, self-existent, He pervades all places low and high.@ (*Atharva* 4.1.3).

As it specifically says in the *Veda*, AThe God-created Vedic knowledge belongs to those who come to ask for it.@ (*Atharva* 12.4.11) Or, as it is more clearly stated in the *Yajur Veda* (26.2) AI do hereby address this salutary speech for the benefit of humanity, for the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, the Shudras, the Vaishyas, the kinsfolk, and the men of the lowest position in society.@

Therefore, it is through this Vedic knowledge that God has educated all of humanity: AO men, God is the Creator and Protector of all. Praise Him with your speech. He has educated humanity through the *Vedas*. God is the guardian of the *Vedas* and the Lord of all. He has revealed the *Vedas*, full of knowledge...@ (*Yajur Veda* 14.28)

AGod is all-pervading, lustrous, bodiless, flawless, sinewless, pure, unpierced by evil. He is Omniscient, knower of the hearts of all... He truly reveals through the *Vedas* all things for His subjects from His immemorial attributes, free from birth and death.@ (*Yajur Veda* 40.8)

In this way, it becomes clear that the Lord has provided this spiritual knowledge to educate and guide all of humanity. Thus, the Vedic knowledge is meant for everyone who seeks it, regardless of their position, status, social class, or background. If they are faithless, then they will go their own way, but those who respect and wish to obtain the Vedic knowledge should not be disregarded. And those who know the wisdom of the Vedic tradition must be willing to allow the same privilege to others, or as it is said, AHe whose knowledge of the four *Vedas* is like four horns, who studies and enjoys the *Vedas*, is perfectly well versed in them all, preaches them to humanity and listens to their teachings from others, is the praiseworthy embodiment of knowledge. It is our duty to propagate it to others, and act upon it in our domestic life with words of veneration.@ (*Yajur Veda* 17. 90)

If this is not clear enough, then this is further corroborated in the *Atharva Veda* (5.17.10): AThe sages, mortals, and the kings, the lovers of truth, have verily given the knowledge of the *Vedas* to others.@

Thus, it becomes the duty and responsibility of those who know the Vedic wisdom to supply it and teach it to others because it can become like a mighty and uplifting force in the way it affects society. And for those who do not know it but still have faith in it, it becomes their highest good to make arrangements by which others can become learned in this knowledge, as confirmed in the *Atharva Veda*: APreached freely, it acts as a powerful force. Held in high esteem it acts as a benefactor of humanity like a leader. It acts as a thunderbolt completely annihilating the usages and practices of a sinner. It acts as a conquest-loving hero throwing light on all topics.@ (*Atharva* 12.5.18-19)

Therefore, it is wrong to think that the Vedic knowledge is only meant for a small section of society, while these verses proclaim that everyone can benefit from it. This is especially the duty of a learned Brahmana: AEven if ten former guardians, none of whom is a Brahmana, espouse the cause of Vedic knowledge, they are no match for a Brahmana who takes into his hand the task of propagating her [the Vedic knowledge]. He alone is her true guardian.@ (*Atharva* 5.17.8) Thus, the Brahmanas, gurus and *acharyas*, if they are true to the Vedic cause, cannot keep the Vedic knowledge to themselves, but must go out of their way to make it available for the benefits of humanity. Otherwise, it is the lack of Vedic spiritual knowledge that corrupts society and misleads people onto the wrong path of ignorance. And those who know the Vedic sciences and withhold it from society

become responsible for the godless nature that civilization exhibits, as confirmed as follows:

AIn ancient times the sages who practiced penance through the seven vital forces, verily thus declared about this divine Vedic knowledge, >Dreadful is the result of neglecting divine knowledge, which causes confusion and calamity, where its teachings are violated.= When infants die, [or are] untimely born, when herds of cattle waste away [from drought or death by other causes], when heroes strike each other dead [as in useless wars], the neglect of Vedic knowledge destroyeth them.@ (*Atharva* 5.17.6-7)

AIgnorance that overtakes a village is spoken of as a star with contradictory light. Lack of Vedic knowledge disturbs the kingdom where fall a lot of [inauspicious] meteors and shooting stars.@ (*Atharva* 5.17.4)

Herein it should become obvious to all that society needs the higher wisdom of the Vedic spiritual knowledge to keep itself on the right path to attain the proper qualifications, insight, cooperation, humility, strength, and the means to work in harmony with each other and nature. Without that, life becomes increasingly complex, and a struggle for existence. Without that, society becomes lost, as well as do those who do not promote it, as also explained in the *Vedas*:

AThey perish who do not preach the *Vedas*. He who hoards the Vedic knowledge loses renown. Their houses are burnt who withhold the Vedic knowledge. He suffers utter destruction who preaches the Vedic knowledge without the support of Nirukta [word meanings] and Grammar.@ (*Atharva* 12.4.3)

AIf a violent [or selfish] man or woman disregards the wealthy store of knowledge of this Vedic speech, he or she gets the stain of inseparable infamy, due to that sin... The God-created Vedic knowledge belongs to those who come to ask for it. The learned call it an outrage on Vedic scholars when one retains Vedic knowledge as his own precious heritage.@ (*Atharva* 12.4. 9, 11)

In this way, it actually becomes dangerous not to help or assist in the spread of Vedic knowledge, or to think that it belongs to only one class of man only, as is typically thought in India. It is like *ahimsa* or non-violence, when a person knows he can help someone in reducing the other person=s suffering but refuses to do so, then he is actually practicing violence, and that will come back to haunt him in the end and create future sufferings of his own. Similarly, AIt [Vedic knowledge] wounds like an arrow him who obstructs its free spread. It brings calamity on him who reviles and abuses it. It is fearfully venomous when it is down-trodden by its foe. It brings death-like darkness on him who has degraded and dishonored it. Pursuing him, Vedic knowledge extinguishes the vital breath of its injurer.@ (*Atharva* 12.5.25-27)

AIt weakens physically him who torments its preachers. It destroys the wealth of him who snatches it away from the learned. It brings misery when it is suppressed, and ill repute when it is shown disrespect. . . It is sinful to try to spoil it. Its destruction is

distressing like an evil dream. . . It brings loss of power to its opponent who forcibly retards its progress, and humiliation when its spread has been retarded. . . It brings poverty when it is being outraged. . . Vedic knowledge, when desecrated, cuts off the injurer of the learned from this world and the next.@ (*Atharva* 12.5.29, 32, 35, 37, 38)

AIf in his house alone one preserves the Vedic knowledge received from an *acharya* or acquired otherwise, but imparts it not to others, such a dishonest person, doing wrong to the learned and the Brahmacaris [those worthy of receiving the Vedic wisdom], departs from this world in a miserable plight.@ (*Atharva* 12.4.53)

Herein we can see that if we have acquired this Vedic knowledge from an authorized teacher or guru, or have grown up with it and have become well acquainted with it, then, in the end, our spiritual advancement and securing the spiritual progress of others is all that really matters. All else is temporary and comes and goes.

Therefore, if we have benefitted from the spiritual knowledge that we have acquired from the Vedic tradition, then it behooves us to share that blessing with others, and provide a means for others to also benefit and become blessed. If, however, we do not do that, then it is but a sign of selfishness, and, indeed, a disqualification for having attained such knowledge. AHe who wants to derive full advantage from this Vedic knowledge should aspire after this life-infusing knowledge. This knowledge, when not given, however, harms a man who does not impart it to others when they ask for it. . . However, unavoidable adversity overtakes him who does not like to part with Vedic knowledge even when it is asked for. His wishes and hopes, which he would like to gain, are never fulfilled when withholding Vedic knowledge.@ (*Atharva* 12.4.13, 19)

Thus, we can see what may happen to those who restrict the flow of Vedic wisdom, or who selfishly hold it as if it is their property alone and not for others. However, it is even more damaging to a leader, king, or ruler who denigrates it, neglects it, takes it cheaply, or does not work to protect its existence and the lives of those who know and teach it. AVedic knowledge preached in all parts of the world attains to fame and dignity. It brings misery and suffering on the king who restricts its spread.@ (*Atharva* 12.4.39) Thus, for anyone who teaches the Vedic wisdom, or for the country who provides for such activities to go on, great well-being can be given. But for a king or ruler who neglects it, great misfortune can follow for himself and his whole family, either in this life or the next. AWhosoever looking on Vedic knowledge as fruitless, or defames it at home, God, the Lord of mighty worlds, reduces his sons and grandsons to extreme poverty.@ (*Atharva* 12.4.38)

Furthermore, a leader who is influenced by those who hate Vedic culture will bring ruin to the whole country, and such a person will depart this life heading toward ultimate darkness in the next. This may be more prophetic than we think, for is not the next statement what is happening in India? AThey who seduce the king [or ruler] and say, >Propagate not Vedic knowledge,= encounter through their lack of sense, the missile shot by a powerful person. . . For the Kshatriya [or leader] who usurps this Vedic knowledge and oppresseth the Brahmanas, the courteous language, heroism, and auspicious fortune

all depart. The energy, vigor, patience and might, the knowledge and mental strength, the glory and virtue, devotion and princely sway, kingship and people, brilliance and honor, splendor and wealth, long life and physical beauty, and name and fame, food and nourishing edibles, right and truth, hospitality and acts of public utility, and children and cattle, all these blessings of a Kshatriya depart from him when he oppresseth the Brahmanas and usurps the Vedic knowledge.@ (*Atharva* 12.4.52, & 5.5-11)

AThe sages, O King, have not bestowed this [Vedic] knowledge on thee [or society at large] for abuse! Seek not, O King, to destroy the Brahmana=s Vedic knowledge, which is unworthy of destruction. A voluptuous, sinful, spiritual degraded king, who destroys the Vedic knowledge of a learned person may live for today, but not tomorrow.@ (*Atharva* 5.18.1-2)

IN CONCLUSION, it should now be clear that:

1. The Vedic knowledge must be made available and open to all of society who sincerely wish to participate in it.

2. If the *Vedas* must be shared, then the temples (I'm talking about India here) also must be open to all who are respectful and sincere, regardless of caste, status, social background, race, or ethnicity.

3. No one who respects Vedic knowledge and seeks its blessing should be denied access to it.

4. It does not belong to only one class or section of society, and such concocted restrictions or barriers must be broken down.

5. Those who know Vedic wisdom must teach it to others and pass it along, or provide and support the means for its distribution by those who can do so, otherwise they leave this world like one who is but a thief, heading toward darkness. (I have many action plans that explain ways in which this can be done in my book ACrimes Against India: And the Need to Protect its Ancient Vedic Culture@ and on my website: www.stephen-knapp.com.

6. Any national leader or politician must pave the way to protect and preserve the Vedic tradition and those who work in this way, or, if he works against the Vedic tradition, he or she loses all that is good and brings a curse on him or herself and to their family for generations.

This is evidence merely from the *Vedas*, while much more could be found that supports this by investigating the Vedic texts that follow, such as the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad-gita* and *Puranas*. For example, in the *Bhagavad-gita* (18.69) Lord Krishna explains, AFor one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, devotional service

is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.@ So, we can understand how much the Lord appreciates those who take the time and endeavor to help spread this information to others.

Furthermore, Lord Krishna continues in the *Bhagavata Purana*: AOne who liberally disseminates this knowledge among My devotees is the bestower of the Absolute Truth, and to him I give My very own self. He who loudly recites this supreme knowledge, which is most lucid and purifying, becomes purified day by day, for he reveals Me to others with the lamp of transcendental knowledge. Furthermore, anyone who regularly listens to this knowledge with faith and attention, all the while engaging in My pure devotional service, will never become bound by the reactions of material work.@ (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 11.29.26-28)

However, one must be careful not to give it to the ignorant or those who hold disrespect for it, or who would mistreat it. AWhoso imparts this beautiful Vedic knowledge not to the learned [those who respect and request it] but to the ignorant, Earth, with the sages, is hard for him to win and rest upon.@ (*Atharva* 12.4.23)

Nonetheless, Lord Krishna clarifies this point as He continues to speak in the *Bhagavata Purana*: AHowever, you should not share this knowledge with anyone who is hypocritical, atheistic or dishonest, or with anyone who will not listen faithfully, who is not a devotee, or who is simply not humble. This knowledge should be taught to those who are free from these bad qualities, who are dedicated to the welfare of the spiritual, and who are saintly and pure. However, if any common people are found to have devotion for the Supreme Lord, they can also be accepted as being qualified to listen. When an inquisitive person begins to understand this knowledge, he or she has nothing further to know. After all, one who has drunk the most palatable nectar cannot remain thirsty.@ (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 11.29.30-32)

This is the message of the *Vedas*, and of Lord Krishna. Any follower of Sanatana-dharma, the Vedic tradition, should take this seriously. The Vedic knowledge is supplied by God to fulfill the spiritual needs of the people. Thus, it is the responsibility of every Dharmist, devotee, or Hindu to be pro-active and spread this opportunity to others as a service to God and to themselves. Everyone should put their differences aside and work together in this way to spread the nectar of the Vedic spiritual knowledge to all who are inquisitive, who are in search of it, or seeking the means to solve their problems, or the way to attain a closer connection with God. There is no higher welfare work than this. This will preserve the culture, and pave the way for higher spiritual progress for generations to come.

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